



SAFETY UPDATE: NATURAL GAS SERVICE

48TH DISTRICT

Senator Luke Esser

Nov./Dec. 2005

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

On the morning of September 2nd, 2004, an explosion ripped through a home in the Spiritridge neighborhood of Bellevue. Tragically, the homeowner died three weeks later from her injuries.

Many residents of Spiritridge and adjoining neighborhoods have remained concerned about the safety of their natural gas service in the year since. I am sending you this report to make certain you are aware of the results of a recently concluded study into the cause of the accident.

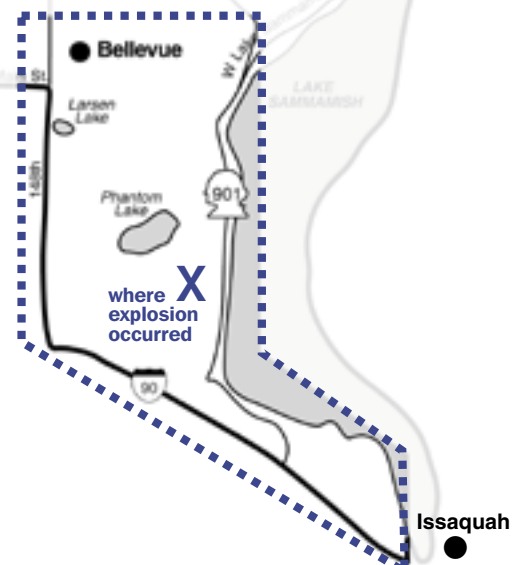
The Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission (UTC), the public agency which regulates electric and natural gas utilities, recently finished a year-long investigation into the accident. It was determined that the explosion was caused by corrosion in a coated-steel pipe that leaked natural gas into the home, where it ignited.

It was also determined that a corrosion-control device owned and operated by Puget Sound Energy (PSE) was wired incorrectly for five days leading up to the explosion, but the investigation concluded that the mis-wiring had "little or no bearing" on the gas leak and explosion of September 2nd, 2004.

In the aftermath of the investigation, PSE, the City of Bellevue and the UTC have reached an agreement regarding natural gas service safety. This agreement is meant to keep the public safe by reducing the risk of any future leaks or explosions.

First, PSE will pay a penalty of \$90,000.

PSE has also agreed to conduct an inventory and assessment of all coated-steel pipes more than 40 years old (most recently-installed pipes are made of plastic) to determine whether further corrective action is needed. This assessment, which will be monitored by the UTC's pipeline safety staff, is expected to be completed by September of 2006.



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Furthermore, PSE will conduct one more leak survey in the Spiritridge neighborhood, in the summer of 2006, for those customers who continue to be served by coated-steel pipes.

Public safety is one of the primary concerns of the Washington State Legislature. I wanted to make sure you were aware of the results of the UTC investigation and of the details of the agreement reached between PSE, the UTC and the City of Bellevue.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments about this issue or about the agreement. I will be happy to work with the UTC, the City of Bellevue and Puget Sound Energy to make certain that any questions you have will be answered.

Sincerely,

Luke Esser

Sen. Luke Esser



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